



19th February 2019 - An Bord Pleanála End of Year Casework Review

An Bord Pleanála has published a preliminary end of year summary of casework statistics for 2018. Highlights are as follows:

- Total case intake was up 6% to 2,734 in 2018 compared to 2,570 in 2017.
- The number of cases decided was up 32% with 2,829 cases decided in 2018 versus 2,143 in 2017.
- 52 valid applications for strategic housing developments were received between 2017 and 2018 and 39 were decided on time, 27 of which were granted with permission for 7,102 housing units and 4,479 student bed-spaces.

Planning Casework and Performance

In 2018, there continued to be an upward trend in the number of planning cases received and decided (Figure 1). Total case intake was up 6% to 2,734 from 2,570 in 2017. The total number of cases decided in 2018 was 2,829 (2,143 in 2017).

For planning appeals, compliance with the statutory objective period of 18 weeks to decide these cases was down from 64% in 2017 to 38% reflecting the fact that An Bord Pleanála is running down a backlog that had generated the previous year.

Dave Walsh, Chairperson of An Bord Pleanála, said *“While it is acknowledged that our capacity and performance to meet our statutory objective period of 18 weeks for appeals has been impacted by the transition to our new IT system (Plean-IT), an increase in overall case-load as well as the fall-out from reduced Board capacity, we have made strong progress to turn things around in recent months.*

In 2018, we recorded a 32% increase in the number of cases decided over the previous year, with over 2,800 decisions made. In November and December alone, we decided almost 600 cases (up 35% on the same months in 2017) and reduced the number of cases on hands by more than 300 from over 1,355 to just over 1,000 files currently”.

Membership of the Board was replenished over the course of 2017 and 2018 and the current complement is now 10 Board Members.

Planning Appeals

Planning appeals accounted for 74% (2,028 cases) of case intake in 2018. Such appeals arise from decisions by planning authorities on applications for planning permission.

64% of all appeals related to residential development which range in scale from home improvements to single and multiple unit accommodation proposals (Figure 4). 2,151 appeals were decided in 2018 up from 1,743 in 2017. Again, the target compliance rate was down at 38% in 2018, however, in the month of December had improved to 48%. The average number of weeks to decide planning appeals was just over 22.

An Bord Pleanála has set a target to decide 80%+ of appeals cases within the statutory objective period of 18 weeks by the fourth quarter of 2019, having worked through and cleared the majority of the case backlog during the first half of this year.

Strategic Housing Development

Since legislation came into effect in July 2017, applications for planning permission for strategic housing developments (100+ housing units, 200+ student bed-spaces and shared accommodation) are made directly to An Bord Pleanála. By the end of December 2018, 52 valid applications for strategic housing developments had been received.

39 applications were decided in 2018 and permission was granted in 27 cases for a total of 7,102 housing units (3,284 houses and 3,818 apartments) and 4,479 student bed spaces. A mandatory timeline of 16 weeks to decide all strategic housing applications was met for all decisions issued.

Mr. Walsh added: *“An Bord Pleanála’s performance in relation to Strategic Housing Developments has been very strong, with 39 cases decided during 2018, all well within the 16-week target. We expect a significant increase in housing applications in 2019, and we will continue to prioritise these cases and deal with any large-scale housing appeals expeditiously.”*

A further 21 strategic housing applications are due for decision over the next 3 to 4 months.

Strategic Infrastructure Development

Since legislative provisions for direct applications for strategic infrastructure developments became operative in 2007, a total of 111 applications have been made. During 2018, 14 cases were decided including a number of large projects.

Compliance with the relevant statutory objective period for this category was at 36% which reflects the level of complexity of cases and the fact that additional time is often required to conduct hearings and to consider further information.

Mr. Walsh added: *“In light of the likely increase in strategic infrastructure applications this year and as implementation of the National Planning Framework accelerates, An Bord Pleanála is initiating a review of strategic infrastructure processes, including pre-application consultations, to learn and apply lessons from our own and participants’ experiences in the past and to identify ways to further streamline and ensure that we are operating as efficiently as possible to facilitate robust and swift decisions.”*

Planning Casework Report

Figure 1: Intake of Cases and Cases Disposed of (Decided) 2014 - 2018

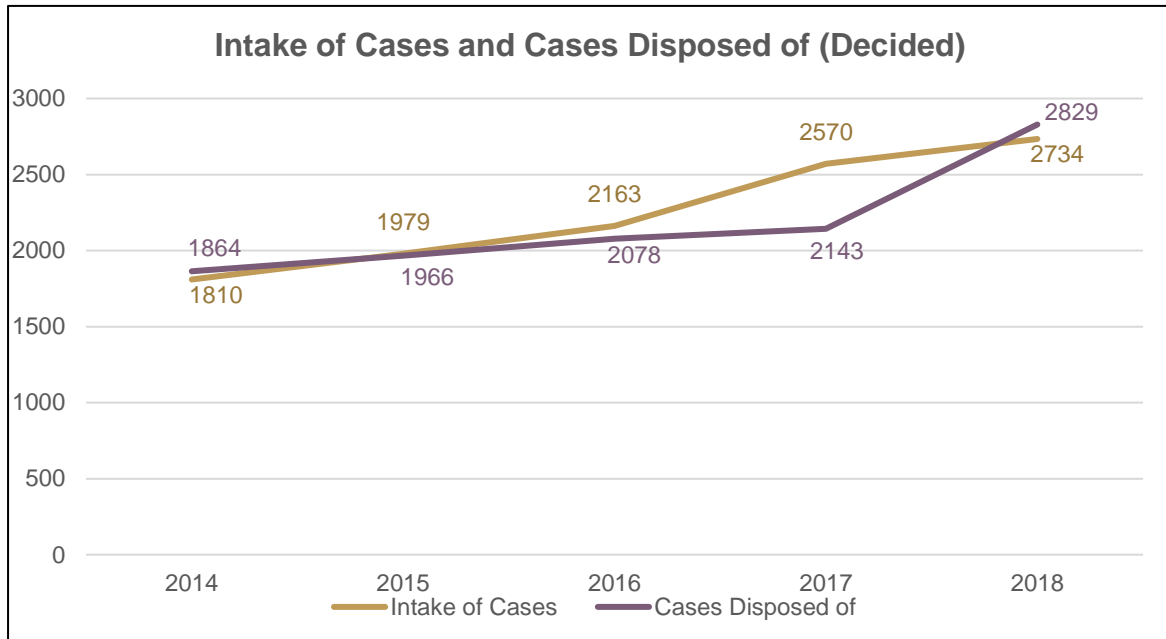


Figure 2

All Planning Cases Intake – 2017 v 2018

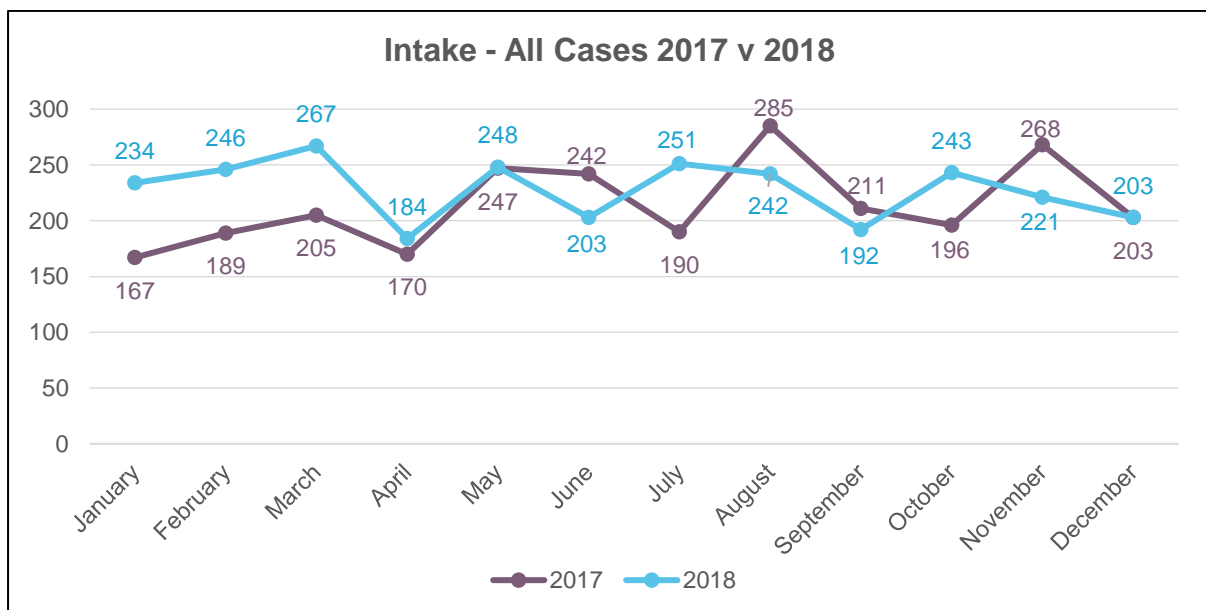


Figure 3

All Planning Cases – Disposed of 2017 v 2018

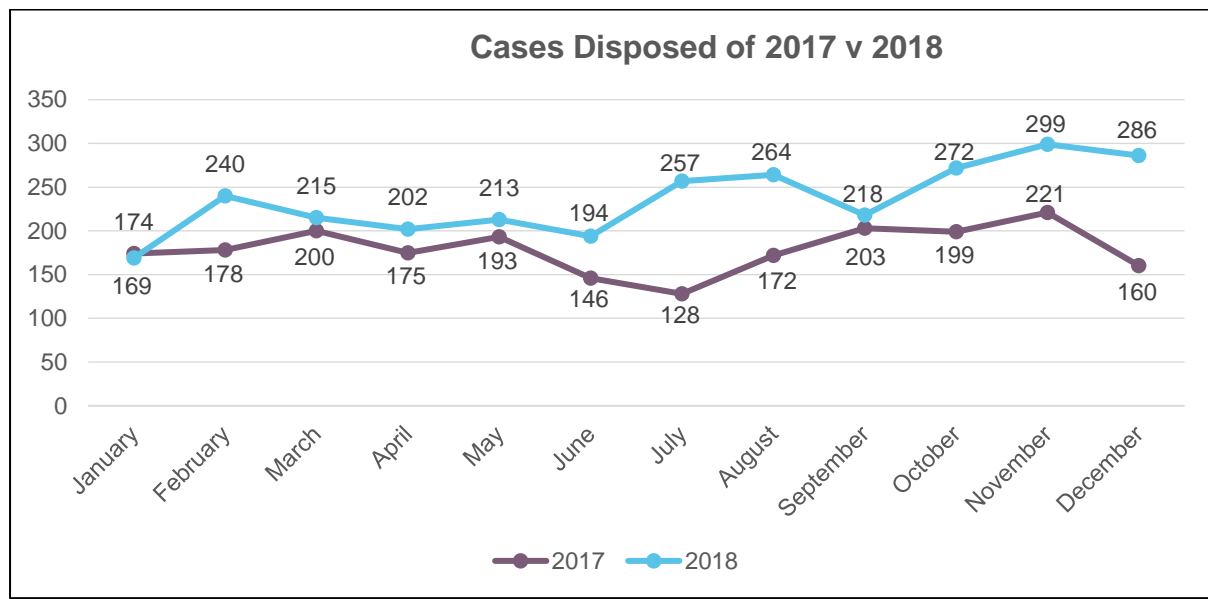


Figure 4

Normal Planning Appeals (2,028 cases) by Development Type Received 2018

